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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/828,335	04/05/2001	John D. Nguyen	6835-60079 (0800195-60)	5648

33931 7590 12/23/2003

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EXAMINER

HO, UYEN T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3731

DATE MAILED: 12/23/2003

12

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/828,335

Applicant(s)

NGUYEN ET AL.

Examiner

(Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 27-32 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 12-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6, 10, 11. 6) ☐ Other:

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election of Invention I in Paper No. 9 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).
2. This application contains claims 27-32 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in Paper No. 9. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancelation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Information Disclosure Statement

3. The information disclosure statements (IDS) submitted on 10/22/2003, 12/05/2003 and 12/9/2003 have been considered and placed in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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Claims 1-7, 10, 12-21, 23-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Boebel et al. (5,454,834). Boebel et al. disclose a tissue connector assembly comprising a self-closing fastener having a shape of two or more stitches (3, 4), two restraining devices (11 and 13), a needle (2) attached to the fastener (col. 8, line 34 to col. 13, line 17). Note: The self-closing fastener is self-closing at the performed sections (3, 4). The restraining device is uncoupled as finishing making the knots, the fastener moves from open configuration towards closed configuration (col. 9, line 1-16).

Note: The introductory statement of intended use and all other functional statements have been carefully considered but are deemed not to impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the Boebel et al.'s tissue connector assembly which is capable of being used as claimed if one desires to do so.

5. Claims 1-9, 12-22, 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yoon (5,810,851). Yoon discloses a tissue connector assembly comprising a fastener (22) having a second end portion having a cross-sectional area grater than other area of the fastener, a restraining device (24) and a needle (44) at one end of the restraining device and attached to the fastener (fig. 7).

The introductory statement of intended use and all other functional statements (There are other functional statements cited in all claims, but for one example "wherein at least a portion of said ... from the fastener" as cited in claim 9) have been carefully considered but are deemed not to impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the Yoon's tissue connector assembly which is capable of being used as claimed if one desires to do so.

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Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claim 11 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art fails to disclose the tissue connector assembly comprising in combination with other limitations of the claim, a second needle as claimed.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to (Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho whose telephone number is (703) 306-3421. The examiner can normally be reached on MULTIFLEX Mon. to Sat..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael J. Milano can be reached on (703) 308-2496. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.



(Jackie) Tan-Uyen T. Ho
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3731
December 15, 2003